Comrade Sandiego's Zimbabwean Dream

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Comrade Sandiego's Zimbabwean Dream

by lefemmerouge

Summary

Carmen Sandiego changes the course of the Zimbabwean liberation war, with reverberations for the present. ACME is tasked with reversing it, but Ivy refuses to go along, accusing her brother of having a "colonial mindset." Later that night, she meets a mysterious woman, her confidential informant, who often wears red-colored clothing. She is more attracted to this woman, than she originally thought, and considers whether the past was changed… for the better.

Notes

Originally posted on AO3 under the name "Comrade Sandiego and the Zimbabwean Dream" in early February of this year.

For this fic, I'm setting it in 2001, as the series ended in January 1999, so this would only be a few years after that happened. As for Carmen's age, the Where on Earth is Carmen Sandiego series set her birth as 1968, meaning she would be thirty-three, while I’m estimating that Ivy would be somewhere in her 20s.

See the end of the work for more notes

The sun was beating down on the blonde hair of a young male teenager. He was standing proudly in his green military-style jacket. It now fit him, unlike in the past. He'd worn it *for years* while working alongside his sister. Every day it was the same thing day-in, day-out, attempting to foil schemes of the "red menace" or "scarlet fiend," as someone called her. It had been quiet *for a while*. No activity had happened, no schemes, no robberies. It seemed strange.

"Hey sis," he began, "What do ya think that Carmen Sandiego is up to?"

His sister, a brown-haired young woman, shrugged. She'd become even more confident and sure of herself than when they had started at ACME many years before. Suddenly, their hi-tech watches beeped. They knew something was up.

Ivy called out, "Player, C-5 us to ACME headquarters, pronto!"

Almost instantly, they appeared in the ACME headquarters. "Gumshoes, we have a problem."

Before Ivy could say anything, Zack interjected. "What's the matter, Chief?" Then, suddenly... the change happened.

The Chief sighed. "Carmen Sandiego just changed the course of the Zimbabwean liberation war."

Zack knew what the Chief meant. He had just finished a class about military tactics used by the Zimbabwean nationalists and Rhodesian government during the conflict, and how it connected to the government's attempt to gain international legitimacy.

At the time, no country in the world recognized Rhodesia, named for British imperialist Cecil Rhodes. It was seen as a rogue state led by a minority-White government, which had unilaterally declared its independence from Britain in 1965. The U.N. Security Council often passed resolutions condemning it, at least until the war ended in December 1979 with the well-known, and infamous, Lancaster House Agreement.

An idea came into Zack's head. He guessed what she did, knowing the course of the war. He remembered it, despite the time disruption. "Um Chief," he began, "was the Internal Settlement, also known as the Salisbury Agreement, affected?" The Chief nodded, solemnly. He said, almost with a choked voice, "she killed *all* the participants at that conference whether they were moderate Black Zimbabwean leaders or White Rhodesian government officials."

Using a remote, he turned on the TV and flipped to a segment on the Zimbabwe National Television Channel. The announcer began. "Today we unveil a statue to our comrade-at-arms, the illustrious Argentinian freedom fighter, Carmen Sandiego. Without her actions twenty-two years ago, we never would have this socialist nation, where all needs are met."

The broadcast showed that representatives of nearby African countries, and other socialist states, like Cuba and North Korea, were present. Many Chinese delegates were there too, but no individuals from any Western European or North American states were there. In fact, they sanctioned the country and refused to recognize it as legitimate. This was often a tactic that Western countries would use against "unfriendly" governments.

After playing the whole broadcast, the Chief turned it off. He turned to Zack and Ivy.

"This is awful. We have to restore the status quo and fix the timeline."

Zack couldn’t agree more. His sister thought differently. She fumed.

"Why should we interfere? Zimbabwe is *better* now than it was before this timeline alteration."

Zack couldn't believe his ears. Was his sister…defending Carmen Sandiego? He never thought that would happen.

"But Sis, if we let this slide, what else will she change?"

To try and shut her down, he added, "in our time, Robert Mugabe was democratically elected as Zimbabwe’s first president and…the country calmed down…*for the better*."

This did not help. It only infuriated her more.

"How could you have such a colonial mindset?" Ivy quipped.

"Wasn’t Mugabe the toast of Western capitals *before* he tried to redistribute land controlled by White farmers to Black Zimbabweans?"

Zack didn't know what to say. He knew she was right about Mugabe. In the former timeline, Mugabe had begun with radical rhetoric, but moderated himself and accepted the country’s nominal independence under an instrument of British neo-colonialism: the Commonwealth of Nations. On the other hand, the fact that his sister called his mindset "colonial" made him sad.

What was she learning in school? He was beginning his retort when Ivy huffed and bellowed.

"I won't be part of something that restores oppression in Zimbabwe. They need liberation, not to be captives of international capital."

She walked out of the room. It almost seemed like she would never return.

Zack didn't know what had come over her. "Chief, I'll get her back, I swear."

The Chief sighed. "You better. *We can't* stop Carmen Sandiego without her."

Neither was aware that Ivy had read Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, in which Fanon said that decolonization can't happen when a magic wand is waved, nor something natural, or a "gentleman's agreement." The Lancaster House Agreement was the latter. There was no doubt.

After running out of ACME, Ivy felt relieved. She wondered about her confidential informant, using the moniker C.S., who she'd been meeting for a while. *Everything* this individual had predicted had come true.

She was about to message this person from her burner phone, a Nokia 9210 Communicator to be exact, when a secure message (a SMS) from a contact, which she had named "Shadowy Figure," came in. "I'd like to meet tonight," it said. She knew this was from the informant. There was no doubt.

The person appeared to be a well-off, sophisticated woman. At least that was her guess. Something about this person drew her in. She almost hoped that this person would reveal her true face that night.

She texted back. "Sounds great. Let me know where."

She headed back to her apartment. She lived by herself while her brother lived at home with their parents. He wasn't of age to have his own place. As she was walking to the cooperatively-run apartment she lived in, called Mooder Clarms, which had been standing since the early twentieth century, but only a cooperative since the late 1940s. She hadn't even been there for a year and was already on many committees composed of apartment residents.

In no time at all, she entered the apartment building and walked up the stairs to her apartment on the second floor. After closing the door, she took off her shoes, put them in the foyer, and moved over to the couch. She plopped down and felt relaxed. She was home, at last.

Her phone dinged. It was her beloved smartphone, a Kyocera QCP-6035, then described as the first device which combined a handheld personal

computer with a phone. It was her brother. "Hey sis, are you ok? After that outburst today, I’m worried." Ivy saw this and shook her head. What she had said earlier was no "outburst." It was what she truly believed.

Sighing, she tried to play it cool. "I'm fine, little bro," she began. "Let’s talk later."

Almost instantly, like he knew what she was going to say, he texted back. "Sure thing, man."

She had always *hated* such gendered expressions. They bothered her to no end. But, with him, she let it slide. She prepared herself for the fateful night.

She readied herself. She applied makeup, cut her nails, chose a beautiful rainbow-colored dress, and put on some flats. Although the informant only told her that she wanted a meeting, Ivy knew where it would be. What happened next was something she never would have expected.

Sometime later, she was outside the night club where she’d met the mysterious woman before. Checking her watch and looking around, she got nervous. Where was the informant? She didn't see her.

Suddenly, a voice came from the nearby alley. "It's…not safe to talk here." Ivy was surprised to hear this.

All the times before, this person had talked to her quickly and handed her papers with information about upcoming evil schemes. Thanks to what this woman had provided, many of Carmen Sandiego's out-there plots *had been foiled*.

"Are you sure you don't want to talk here?" Ivy asked innocently.

The other woman moved her head around rapidly. She grabbed Ivy’s hand.

"We can't…people may be watching."

This cryptic remark caught Ivy off guard. She went along with it and didn't object to this woman firmly holding her hand as they went running through the streets.

After whirlwind of running, she found herself in front of…her own apartment building! She began to let go, but the woman pleaded. "Please, I can't let...them find me."

Ivy had no idea who she was talking about. Grumbling, she walked in with the woman back into her apartment.

She was a bit suspicious since no one appeared to be following them. She was at least willing to hear the woman out. This wasn’t the way this night was supposed to go.

She walked inside her apartment and was nervous. Before she could pull out the pepper spray from her pocket, the woman spoke.

"I know you might be worried about me and wary. That is understandable," she began. "You probably want to know who this *beautiful woman* giving you information is…right?"

Without a thought, she nodded. The woman laughed. She hadn't expected that. She had one more request.

"Ok, close your eyes for a second. I need to get ready."

Because Ivy was curious, she decided to comply. At the same time, she reached into her pocket and held onto her pepper spray, *tightly*.

She heard a cloth fall onto the floor. The woman said softly, "you can open your eyes now."

Ivy saw a woman with flowing brown hair and a sparkling red dress. She had a sudden realization. It was the woman whose schemes she countered with the help of the Chief and her brother.

"Wait. Are you…Carmen Sandiego?" The woman chuckled. She had more grace than any other female villains she’d encountered.

"Yes, Mademoiselle, I am the illustrious Carmen Sandiego."

Ivy was shocked beyond words. *She had let the villain she had foiled time and again into her abode! Why would she want her own plans to be scuttled by ACME?* It made no sense.

Carmen began again. "You passed my many tests…with flying colors, so I thought I'd reveal my true identity to you, bella donna."

She proceeded to bow her head and kiss Ivy's hand. This lady-like demeanor made Ivy blush. Her face and cheeks turned the color of a ripe tomato.

"You really like me, don't you?" Carmen teased. Ivy didn't know what to say in response. She was taken with the beautiful woman in front of her. It *almost* immobilized her.

Breathing deeply, she regained her composure. "So, why are you here? And what do you want from me?"

Carmen Sandiego stepped back and stretched. Cracking her knuckles, she prepared herself to answer Ivy's two probing questions. She knew she had to remain convincing so that Ivy would trust her.

"Well, if you must now, I am afraid of White supremacists taking a pot shot at me," and added, almost reluctantly, "I'd like ACME's protection."

Ivy began to say something, but Carmen continued. "And uh…I'd like to go…on a date with you."

This was *a lot* for her. A thirty-three-year-old woman asking *her* out on a date was something she hadn't experienced before. And a villain at that. She had to know more.

"Ok, before I respond to your…request for a date, I have to know. Did you go back in time and murder all those people in Salisbury?" Carmen nodded. She then explained.

"I read about what happened in Zimbabwe's liberation war, how Mugabe became a neocolonial toady, and the Internal Settlement which led to all of that. So, I wanted…*NEEDED* to change history."

Ivy understood. But she could *never* do what Carmen did. She couldn't commit a violent act like that. How was Carmen different? She wasn't sure. But, she kept being drawn closer to her. Something about her made her sympathize with her action. She wasn't sure whether it was the beauty of this 30-something woman in front of her, her knowledge, or that Carmen was a "bad girl."

After all, as Frantz Fanon had written, destroying the colonial world means "nothing less than demolishing the colonialist's sector, burying it deep within the Earth, or banishing it from the territory." Arguably, Carmen's actions had been part of that process. Where Carmen and Ivy went from here was up to them...

End Notes

I originally wrote about this fandom in my first fan fic (on AO3). I decided to revisit it here once again for fun. I slightly rewrote that fic here (on this site). We will see. I will say that some of this fic is based on my real-life, although I'm not going to say which parts, for protection of my privacy. If you want to read more about the Internal Settlement and Lancaster House Agreement, I recommend you read the two well-sourced Wikipedia pages as a starter.

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